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Activities of the Department of Public Information (part one)

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In its mission to help fulfil the substantive purposes of the United Nations by strategically communicating the activities and concerns of the Organization to achieve the greatest public impact, the Department of Public Information continues to coordinate its communications campaigns on key priority areas and to maintain a balance between new and traditional means of communications. It also makes every effort to widen the pool of its communications partners and to strengthen its outreach to the public in both developed and developing countries through the network of United Nations information centres. In implementing its wide range of activities, the Department is guided by a culture of evaluation and performance management.

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 62/111 B, summarizes the key advances made by the Department since July 2007 in promoting the work of the United Nations to a global audience.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 62/111 B, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Public Information submitted for consideration by the Committee on Information at its twenty-ninth session and requested the Secretary-General to continue reporting to the Committee on the activities of the Department.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly called on the Department to provide specific information on a number of its activities. The Bureau of the Committee on Information, which met in September 2007, advised the Department to cluster the requested information around thematic areas and to present it in two parts. Accordingly, part one of the present report, addresses such areas as general activities, communications on thematic issues and United Nations peacekeeping, news services, library services and outreach services. Part two (A/AC.198/2008/3) addresses two specific areas: the activities of the network of United Nations information centres, and the United Nations website. Unless otherwise indicated, parts one and two combined cover the activities of the Department for the period July 2007 to February 2008.

3. Also in its resolution 62/111 B, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to include in his report to the thirtieth session of the Committee on Information proposals, along with their financial implications, to improve the scope of press releases in addition to the existing languages in order to widen the United Nations message, assuring their comprehensiveness and up-to-date nature, bearing in mind budgetary constraints. Such proposals are contained in the annex to part two of the report.

II. Strategic directions of the Department of Public Information

4. The mission of the Department of Public Information is to help fulfil the substantive purposes of the United Nations by strategically communicating the activities and concerns of the Organization to achieve the greatest public impact. In approaching that goal, the Department has focused on coordinated communications campaigns in key priority areas, maintaining a balance between new communications technologies, especially the Internet, and traditional means of communications, including radio and print materials, widening the pool of its communications partners and strengthening its outreach to the public in both developed and developing countries through the network of United Nations information centres. The Department's activities are guided by the imperative of promoting a culture of evaluation and performance management.

A. Strategic communications planning

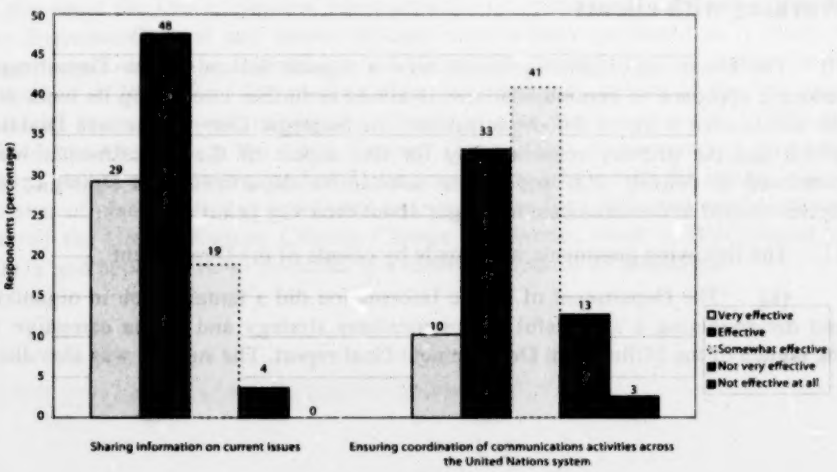
5. By developing its strategic communications workplans in the field and at Headquarters on the basis of broad communications priority themes identified early in the year, the Department has been able to achieve an increased degree of focus in its worldwide communications activities, as well as improved synergy between Headquarters and the field, with a noteworthy increase in the involvement of United

Nations country teams and United Nations communications groups. In January 2008, the Department, led by its Strategic Communications Division and guided by the vision of the Secretary-General, identified broad communications priority themes, organized according to the three pillars of the Organization — development, peace and security, and human rights — as well as climate change. In addition to identifying those four broad priority themes, the Department pointed to the Secretary-General's emphasis on the importance of the delivery of results by a stronger and more accountable Organization that can advance the global common good by securing global public goods, which will guide our communications efforts. The Department also identified Africa as a regional focus, and youth as a strategic audience, for its communications work. It also provided a preliminary calendar of activities to be organized in 2008 in the aforementioned areas and a note on the four International Years designated by the General Assembly for observance in 2008. This information was shared with the network of United Nations information centres, which were asked to develop their own workplans based on this guidance, taking into account local considerations and opportunities.

B. System-wide cooperation

6. Established by the Department of Public Information in 2002, the United Nations Communications Group has now emerged as a strong unifying platform for United Nations communicators. Through weekly meetings at Headquarters, issue-specific task forces and annual meetings at the principals' level, it continues to provide an effective mechanism to develop and implement common communications strategies. The Group's membership has steadily grown and now includes the entire United Nations system. In 2007, the Group held 33 weekly meetings (compared with 26 in 2006). In a survey conducted at the end of 2007, as many as 77 per cent of the respondents said the weekly meeting was either very effective or effective in achieving its stated goal of sharing the latest and most accurate information and in ensuring the coordination of communications activities across the United Nations system (see figure I). Some members also called for the weekly meeting to be more focused on communications strategies on key system-wide issues.

Figure I
Effectiveness of United Nations Communications Group weekly briefings in 2007



7. The Group has created several communications task forces on specific issues, including climate change, the Millennium Development Goals, the Arab world and public-opinion polling. These task forces have proved particularly effective in developing and implementing joint United Nations system communications strategies.

8. With the establishment of United Nations communications groups at the country level, United Nations communicators at the national level have found an effective tool for pooling their resources and combining their efforts to achieve common communications goals. So far, more than 80 country-level communications groups have been created. While the results vary, generally speaking these efforts have had a positive impact, as set out below:

(a) In Pakistan, the communications group has created a common newsletter and transformed the United Nations Information Centre library into a United Nations system resource centre;

(b) In Uzbekistan, the local communications group has created a common database of all special events;

(c) In Kenya, during the recent political crisis, the United Nations Information Centre held 11 press briefings in the period from 2 to 11 January involving United Nations system organizations under the banner of the United Nations Communications Group.

C. Publicizing the activities of the General Assembly

9. The work and decisions of the General Assembly feature prominently in the Department's news output. All meetings of the General Assembly are webcast in English and in the floor language. The General Assembly website was revamped for the sixty-second session, making it easier to find documents, resolutions and the work programmes of the respective committees. The new site, available in all six official languages and fully accessible to persons with disabilities, is now more General Assembly-focused. However, access through a session-based page has been retained. The Department also loans a staff member to serve as the spokesperson for the President of the General Assembly.

D. Working with clients

10. The client consultation process, now a regular feature of the Department's strategic approach to communications, is aimed at further integrating its work with the substantive work of the Organization. The Strategic Communications Division, which has the primary responsibility for this aspect of the Department's work, continued to consult with and advise substantive departments on strategies and tactics needed to communicate messages about their key priorities.

11. The following comments were made by clients of the Department:

(a) "The Department of Public Information did a fantastic job in organizing and disseminating a successful communications strategy and media campaign for the launch of the Millennium Development Goal report. The success was also due to

the effective mechanism of coordination among agencies" (Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs);

(b) "The relationship between the office of the United Nations System Influenza Coordination (UNSIC) and the Department of Public Information was consistently good, and we managed to maintain media coverage for the launch of the 2007 UNSIC report in the way we wanted" (David Nabarro, United Nations System Senior Coordinator for Avian and Human Influenza).

E. Coordination between the Department of Public Information and the Office of the Spokesperson of the Secretary-General

12. The Department maintains a close working relationship with the Office of the Spokesperson. The daily morning strategic communications meeting brings together the Spokesperson and the Deputy Spokesperson, senior officials of the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the Department, to initiate and develop guidance for the daily noon briefing. Department-produced fact sheets and background materials are distributed through the Office of the Spokesperson as well as other mechanisms. The Department also helps arrange and hosts press briefings and interviews with senior officials on a range of issues. Throughout the day, Staff of the Office of the Spokesperson work with their counterparts in the Department of Public Information media accreditation, United Nations Television and the United Nations information centres to ensure that media coverage of the United Nations is as efficient and effective as possible. The information centres also provide valuable media-related support to the Spokesperson travelling with the Secretary-General on his official visits to Member States. In September 2007, for example, when the Secretary-General visited the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in connection with negotiations for a joint United Nations-African Union peacekeeping operation in Darfur, the United Nations Information Centre in Tripoli, in coordination with the Office of the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, helped generate coverage in 21 regional newspapers and special programmes in four radio stations and four television networks.

13. The Department also continued to work in close cooperation with the Office of the Spokesperson and the Director of Communications in the Office of the Secretary-General to correct inaccuracies and address misrepresentations in the media about the United Nations. More proactively, opinion and editorial articles by the Secretary-General and senior officials were widely published as a result of vigorous efforts by the Department and United Nations information centres. In the latter half of 2007, some 295 media outlets published such articles by the Secretary-General. The article with the highest number of placements was entitled "Why the World has Changed in the UN's Favour" (June 2007). It appeared in 66 media outlets in 41 countries in a total of 21 languages. The article with the second highest number of placements was on climate change. It was first published on the opening day of the United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Bali (December 2007), and appeared in 40 countries in a record number of 23 languages.

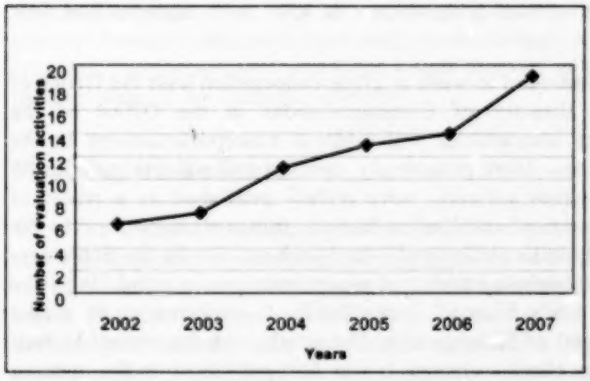
F. Multilingualism

14. In response to General Assembly resolution 61/266, the Department continued to promote multilingualism in its activities. The United Nations News Centre, the global gateway to news about the United Nations on the Web, and United Nations Radio programmes are now available in all official languages. United Nations Radio programmes are also produced in Portuguese, Kiswahili and other non-official languages, namely, Bangla, French Creole, Hindi, Indonesian and Urdu. The television programme *UN in Action* is made available in several of the official languages, according to demand. The Department is also looking into ways of expanding the translation and production by United Nations information centres of important United Nations documents into languages other than the official languages of the United Nations.

G. Focus on evaluation

15. Fostering a culture of evaluation within the Department of Public Information has led to a surge in assessment activities by its programme managers (see figure II). In 2002, when the annual programme impact review was first introduced, the Department undertook six evaluations. By 2007, the number of evaluations had more than tripled, to 19 programme assessments, covering a wide range of Department products, services and activities. The Department has also been working to improve its data-collection tools, including through the expansion of its capacity to measure the reach of its products. For example, the Department now tracks the number of times that United Nations Television videos are taken by television stations using satellite feeds.

Figure II
Evaluation activities



III. Thematic issues

A. The Millennium Development Goals

16. The promotion of the Millennium Development Goals is one of the key priorities of the Department. As part of its continuing work in this area, the Department worked closely with the Millennium Campaign to provide support to the "Stand Up and Speak Out against Poverty" initiative. More than 30 information centres worked with their country partners to contribute to the increased participation in 2007 of more than 43 million people worldwide, exceeding the Guinness World Record set the previous year.

17. To spur action on the Millennium Development Goals at the crucial halfway mark, the Department promoted the launch, in Geneva on 2 July, of the *Millennium Development Goals report 2007* by the Secretary-General, as well as more than 20 regional launches organized by information centres and United Nations system partners. Extensive media coverage was generated, reflecting the key messages in the press materials and closely corresponding to regional and national press events. The Department also boosted media outreach for the inaugural meeting, at Headquarters in September, of the Millennium Development Goals Africa Steering Group which was convened by the Secretary-General, and worked with information centres in Buenos Aires, Cairo, Dar es Salaam and New Delhi to organize media round tables in order to focus press attention on what is needed if the Goals are to be achieved at the regional level.

B. Human rights

18. A United Nations system-wide human rights advocacy campaign for the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was launched on 10 December 2007 with the overarching theme of "Dignity and justice for all of us". A United Nations Communications Group task force is facilitating the coordination of system-wide outreach activities throughout the year. The activities include:

(a) A special sixtieth anniversary edition of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (DPI/876/REV.4);

(b) A two-page, easy-to-print online version of the Declaration, as well as a template for local language versions and a CD-ROM collection of historical photographs and artwork to be used by the United Nations information centres;

(c) A brochure outlining ideas for celebrating the anniversary, to be shared with civil society, businesses, Governments and academia;

(d) A website about Human Rights Day 2007 and the commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary (http://www.un.org/events/humanrights/2007/);

(e) An exhibition of cartoons highlighting the sixtieth anniversary, entitled "Sketching human rights", launched in advance of Human Rights Day in the public lobby at United Nations Headquarters;

(f) The launch by the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels of an interactive, information-sharing website (http://www.knowyourrights2008.org), in cooperation with the United Nations information services in Geneva and Vienna

and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, with support from France, Italy and Switzerland.

19. In December, an opinion and editorial article about the Declaration by the High Commissioner for Human Rights was placed by United Nations information centres in newspapers in Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Lesotho, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Thailand, Turkey and Ukraine.

20. On the occasion of the adoption by the General Assembly of its resolution 62/149, by which the Assembly called for a moratorium on the death penalty, an opinion and editorial article by the High Commissioner was placed in prominent publications in China, Germany, India, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Thailand, Ukraine, the United Republic of Tanzania and the United States of America. Seven press conferences were arranged for human rights rapporteurs to coincide with their presentations to the Third Committee and at other times during the year.

C. Climate change

21. The Department chaired an inter-agency task force, with a view to keeping the focus on the priority issue of climate change, especially with regard to the launch of the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the coordination and promotion of two major events: the high-level event on climate change on 24 September, and the Climate Change Conference, held in Bali in December.

22. For the high-level event, the Department led the task force in producing one coordinated press kit projecting a unified message on this crucial issue. It was presented on the website "Gateway to the UN System's Work on Climate Change" (http://www.un.org/climatechange/), which is also an initiative of the task force and is coordinated and produced by the Department. The inter-agency media team, including officers from the Department, mobilized to contact dozens of media outlets and set up interviews, and information centres contacted and monitored regional media.

23. Media analysis showed that coverage of the event was almost universal in the international media and in all regions, with the majority of articles picking up the main message that the high-level event was designed to generate momentum for the launch of a political negotiating process in Bali. The Secretary-General was frequently portrayed as the driving force behind the United Nations event. The following comments were among those made in the media:

(a) "UN convenes largest-ever meeting of global leaders on climate change" (*Xinhua*);

(b) The United Nations takes the lead to "galvanize world leaders" (*Gulf News*);

(c) "All eyes are on Bali" (*The Irish Times*);

(d) "It is essential to conduct negotiations under UN leadership" (*Asahi Shimbun*).

Figure III
Media response to the Bali Conference outcome (percentage)

24. For the United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Bali, the Department worked with the climate change task force, the Secretary-General's climate change team and the network of United Nations information centres to coordinate outreach, messages and activities in Bali, as well as to amplify and monitor media coverage. Again, media coverage was widespread: an analysis of more than 500 clippings from some 170 media outlets in 49 countries showed that 46 per cent of the media portrayed the Conference outcome as being positive, 32 per cent as being neutral and 22 per cent as being negative (see figure III). Opinion articles on the Conference were also generally favourable. Of the editorials monitored, 66 per cent were positive and 18 per cent negative, while 45 per cent of opinion and editorial articles were positive and 21 per cent were negative. Negative or unfavourable accounts of the Conference generally reflected the opinions of those who either doubt that climate change is a problem or believe that the results of Bali did not go far enough. In terms of overall coverage, 96 per cent considered the role of the United Nations and the Secretary-General in support of the process to be very positive.

D. World Summit on the Information Society

25. The Department continued to work with partners to publicize the many initiatives carried out in implementation of the World Summit on the Information Society. It helped to build media interest in the seven major events organized by the Global Alliance for Information and Communication Technologies and Development during 2007, culminating in the "Connect Africa" summit, held in Kigali on 29 and 30 October. It also handled the communications arrangements for the second annual meeting of the Internet Governance Forum in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 12 to 15 November. The extensive and positive media coverage included more than 400 original press articles (170 in Portuguese, 140 in English, 60 in Spanish and 40 in French), as well as broadcast reports by BBC, the Globo television network and CNN Español.

E. The question of Palestine

26. The Department continued to implement the special information programme on the question of Palestine by training five Palestinian broadcast journalists (two men and three women) in November and December 2007, updating the booklet *The question of Palestine and the United Nations* in the six official-language versions and updating the permanent exhibitions on Palestine at Headquarters and in Geneva. The training programme, which started in 1995 pursuant to a General Assembly resolution, has trained a total of 122 Palestinian journalists to date. The Department assisted in the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November, which included a Palestinian cultural exhibition in the public lobby of the General Assembly building.

F. Dialogue among civilizations

27. The Department assisted the Office of the Alliance of Civilizations in its effort to publicize the first Alliance of Civilizations Forum, held in Madrid on 15 and 16 January 2008. A background press briefing was organized at Headquarters and a press release and a media advisory were circulated to targeted media. An information officer from the Department also provided media support at the meeting. In addition, arrangements were made for the participation in the forum of Paulo Coelho, United Nations Messenger of Peace, to promote intercultural dialogue. The Department also participated in consultations with the Alliance secretariat on the development of its rapid reaction response mechanism, an online directory of experts on intercultural issues to whom the media can turn to in times of international crisis, and the Alliance of Civilizations clearing house, an online educational tool aimed at improving cross-cultural understanding on a wide variety of issues.

Box 1
Remembering victims of the Holocaust

United Nations information centres promoted the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust (27 January) through a variety of activities:

In Rio de Janeiro, a special event was held attended by the President of Brazil, two state governors and the mayor of the city of Rio de Janeiro.

In Prague, a series of educational programmes entitled "Remembering the Holocaust" was held for secondary school students.

In Tokyo, an educational workshop was held on the theme of the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust and human rights.

In Poland, an exhibition opened of the best posters selected at the 2007 contest entitled "Holocaust: forever in our memory", held for secondary school students.

In Zambia, a special event was organized by the United Nations information centres in Lusaka and the Youth United Nations Association of Zambia.

At the United Nations Office in Kyiv, a round-table discussion was held in partnership with the Ministry of Education of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Holocaust Study Centre.

G. Outreach Programme on the Holocaust and the United Nations

28. On 28 January, the outreach programme on the Holocaust and the United Nations organized a memorial ceremony and concert in the General Assembly Hall — one of many events held to mark the International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. The outreach programme also organized, with the participation of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, its annual seminar in New York, involving leading grass-roots organizations working to combat hatred. Other major activities in the past six months include:

(a) The publication of three discussion papers by experts in the field of genocide and Holocaust studies from Ghana, the United States and the Sudan;

(b) Special film screenings, a panel discussion and exhibitions on the Holocaust, and the launch of a United Nations stamp commemorating the victims of the Holocaust;

(c) Four one-week training seminars for national information officers from the global network of United Nations information centres. These seminars aim to raise public awareness, at no cost to the Organization, about the Holocaust and its relevance today. Another such seminar will be held in Berlin early in 2008.

H. The Rwanda genocide and the United Nations

29. The Department carried out the activities of the outreach programme on the Rwanda genocide through a variety of materials, events and exhibitions. The "Lessons from Rwanda" exhibition, produced by the Department in partnership with the Aegis Trust, travelled to locations in Burkina Faso, Canada, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and United Republic of Tanzania. United Nations information centres and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda also held conferences, workshops and seminars on the prevention of genocide.

30. An information kit produced in November in English and French includes information on the programme, including backgrounders and audio-visual material. Two posters, on sexual violence and on supporting survivors, were produced in English, French and Kinyarwanda. A website in all six official languages was launched in December.

31. In October and November, the Department organized a photography project that aims to document, through photographs taken by survivors themselves, the hopes, dreams and lives of the participants, who are drawn from a cross-section of Rwandan society and include orphans, widows and young people, as well as a perpetrator. Arrangements were made for equipment used in the project to be donated for use in local capacity-building projects. As a result, a multilingual photographic exhibition is scheduled to be displayed this year in Montreal and Toronto, Canada; Dakar; Ouagadougou; Kigali; Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania; and Cape Town, Johannesburg and Pretoria, South Africa.

I. Two hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade

32. The Department, in collaboration with the Caribbean Community ambassadors' caucus, spearheaded a programme of outreach activities in 2007 to commemorate the bicentenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, which included the following:

(a) A commemorative meeting of the General Assembly;

(b) A panel discussion, a briefing for non-governmental organizations, an exhibition entitled "Lest we forget: the triumph over slavery", a cultural exposition showcasing the music and literature of the African diaspora, a series of United Nations Radio programmes, a dedicated website in the six official United Nations languages, articles in *UN Chronicle* and a poster;

(c) A variety of activities organized by United Nations information centres in Ankara, Asunción, Bogota, Brussels, Khartoum, New Delhi, Ouagadougou, Moscow, Port of Spain, Prague, Tokyo and Yerevan.

J. The New Partnership for Africa's Development

33. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Africa's blueprint for development, continued to be a major focus for the Department, which continued to highlight United Nations support for its implementation. A special issue of *Africa Renewal* magazine was produced on the goals, achievements and challenges of NEPAD, and arrangements were made to publish feature articles about NEPAD in major media in Africa and Asia. In 2007, some 30 articles in English, and the same number in French, which had been placed in major media, were republished or posted a total of 370 times in English and French in print media and on websites, including major Africa-interest web portals such as allafrica.com, africafiles.org and afrik.com. Material from *Africa Renewal* appeared on weblogs 23 times in 2007.

34. Working in close consultation with the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa, the Department promoted the second international conference on demobilization, disarmament, rehabilitation and stability in Africa, held in Kinshasa from 12 to 14 June 2007. The public information campaign resulted in at least 60 articles on the conference in the Congolese, other African and international media.

IV. Public information and United Nations peacekeeping

35. The Department of Public Information continues to play an important role in planning the public information components of new peacekeeping operations and in providing communications support and guidance to ongoing missions. For example, the Department planned the public information component for the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, recruited staff, designed and launched the mission website and drafted and disseminated guidance and fact sheets on mission developments. It also designed the public information section for the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad, drafted the initial communications strategy, worked with the European Union (EU) to align the public information

activities of both the United Nations and the European Union missions there and participated in the recruitment and deployment of initial public information staff.

36. Staff from the Department visited the missions in Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, the Sudan and Timor-Leste to assist public information components with their communications strategies and challenges. The Department also made progress in helping peacekeeping missions to develop their own websites by introducing a content management system, which, once fully implemented, will ensure that peacekeeping operations can maintain consistent and up-to-date websites with minimal technical expertise.

A. Cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support

37. The Department of Public Information worked closely with both the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support in recruiting public information staff for peacekeeping operations, including for new public information leadership in the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the United Nations Mission in the Sudan, UNAMID, MINURCAT and the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT). The Department of Public Information and the Department of Field Support have developed extensive personnel rosters for all levels and types of expertise of field public information staff. The Department of Public Information also seconded a senior staff member to serve as chief of public information for UNMIT, as well as a senior spokesperson for the Darfur negotiations in Sirte, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

38. The Department of Public Information and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations also cooperated on making better use of United Nations Radio in peace operations. In 2007, the Department of Public Information conducted its fourth annual training course for field public information officers with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, inviting chiefs of radio from all peacekeeping operations to share best practices and lessons learned and to discuss new policies relating to United Nations Radio. The Department of Public Information is currently participating in a multi-agency study of peacekeeping radio stations, which will be used to assist in the future planning of peacekeeping operations and for the possible transition of United Nations stations to locally controlled enterprises.

B. Ending sexual exploitation and abuse

39. The Department of Public Information continued to assist the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in raising awareness on progress in ending sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel, by means of public information materials and press briefings, both at Headquarters and in the field. During the past year, for example, UNMIL was able to report that allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse had fallen dramatically during the second half of the year. Media coverage of the issue is now less sensational than in the past.

V. News services

40. Led by its News and Media Division, the Department has continued to bring news regarding the full range of the Organization's diverse activities to the world on a daily basis, through various media, including print, radio, television, photography and the Internet.

A. United Nations Television

41. United Nations Television provides coverage of events at Headquarters that is accessed directly by the international television news agencies Associated Press Television News (APTN) and Reuters Television, as well as by a number of large broadcasting organizations, including ABC, Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabiya, BBC, CBS, CCTV, CNN, the European Broadcasting Union, FOX News, NBC and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). Several other broadcasting organizations receive the United Nations signal indirectly. Stories covering United Nations activities in the field, particularly peacekeeping operations and the work of various United Nations agencies, continue to reach an international audience through UNifeed, a daily 10-minute satellite feed transmitted via APTN, Eurovision, Reuters and SABC to more than 1,000 broadcasters around the world. In 2008, with support from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNifeed will launch a web-based delivery service to broadcasters. The service will supplement the satellite feed, enabling the Department to post additional stories on the website.

Box 2

The global monitoring service Teletrax, shows that in 2007, UNifeed news stories aired at least 3,163 times worldwide. It should be noted that not all stations using United Nations materials are monitored.

42. The launch of the new monthly television programme *21st Century* has provided an opportunity to expand the global audience for United Nations Television. The programme features high-quality human-interest stories, easily adaptable to language versions, reflecting some of the most important global issues engaging the United Nations family. The programme is carried by a number of broadcasting companies, including BBC World, TVE (Spain), CCTV, Bhutan Broadcasting Service, Deutsche Welle, DK4 (Denmark), France 24, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, Namibia Broadcasting Corporation, SABC Africa, Viet Nam Television, TV3 Ghana and the Africa Channel, with many other stations also showing interest in the new format.

43. The award-winning *UN in Action* series continues to be broadcast by 38 subscribers. They include Bhutan Broadcasting Service, Chongqing Broadcasting Group of China, CCTV, CNN Español, RTP (Portugal), TVE (Spain), Namibia Broadcasting Corporation, Radio Television Hong Kong, Trend News Agency (Azerbaijan), Viet Nam Television, Link TV and TV3 Ghana.

B. United Nations Radio

44. In its ongoing efforts to bring the core messages of the Organization to the widest possible global audience, United Nations Radio has continued to expand and strengthen its partnerships with a broad range of local, national and regional broadcasters. New United Nations Radio partners include Liaoning Regional Radio and its six affiliate stations (China); RTÉ Radio (Ireland); Radio Nationale du Mali; Trend News Agency (Azerbaijan); Agencia Europa Press Latin American Service; FM Voz de Esperanza (Argentina); Rádio difusão Portuguesa (Portugal); and Abu Dhabi Radio.

Box 3
Expanding the reach of United Nations Radio

The Department of Public Information recently contracted a leading audience research organization to provide a list of potential radio partners in 20 countries in Africa and Asia that are transmitting in one or more of the languages in which United Nations Radio broadcasts. The Department is now contacting potential stations identified by the study to promote the use of its programmes. In addition, distribution to francophone Africa is under way, targeting 200 private, commercial and community radio stations in Africa, using the WorldSpace Afristar satellite and the Radio France Internationale OrdiSpace download system.

45. On the basis of the success of the United Nations Radio News Service, a United Nations Foundation pilot project which focuses on the North American market, offering short news reports and sound bites to radio stations over the Web, United Nations Radio has begun to shift away from offering exclusively packaged programmes towards providing frequent short news reports and access to raw audio. This variety of formats offers broadcasters more flexibility and convenience in using United Nations Radio material. Following the success of the English-language service, the system has been replicated in Spanish, Arabic and Portuguese and will be extended further to include other languages in the first half of 2008.

46. The newly acquired content distribution network is also being used to distribute audio files to server nodes worldwide, ensuring faster file downloading by partner stations and making it easier to reach the huge population of Internet users. The additional storage capability of the network will also enable United Nations Radio sites to make available a vast archive of recent and historical audio programmes.

C. Press releases

47. Accuracy, objectivity and timeliness remain the cornerstones for the production of press releases. Building on the surveys and media analyses completed last year, which found that a majority of journalists at Headquarters and in the field considered such press releases to be useful to them in their work, the Department is

now studying ways to improve access to and the usability of the online versions of the press releases by making stylistic changes and modifications to the current database. Further, given the interest expressed by Member States in the possibility of expanding the press release service to the other official languages, the Department has studied a range of alternatives, providing an overview of the costs involved in the annex to part two of the report (A/AC.198/2008/3).

Box 4

In total, 84 per cent of all press releases, in the working languages of English and French, are posted within two hours of the close of a meeting.

D. News Centre

48. As part of its continuing efforts to improve the online delivery of news and related resources about the United Nations to global audiences, the Department has launched a redesigned version of its main news portal, the United Nations News Centre. The redesign effort, which began with the English-language site, with work continuing on other language versions, is aimed at enhancing the site's usability, visual attractiveness and ability to facilitate visitors' access to the broadest range of related content, including the Department's multimedia products and services. Links to the News Centre and stories from the associated United Nations News Service now appear on a growing number of external websites around the world. The total number of unique visitors to the English-language site of the News Centre reached 1 million, in November 2007. The number of subscribers to the site's e-mail news service (in French and English) increased steadily, reaching a combined total of nearly 52,000 in December 2007.

E. "Ten stories the world should hear more about"

49. Throughout the period under review, the Department continued its efforts to draw the interest of world media to stories that do not attract sufficient attention. This was achieved, in part by giving more prominent coverage to such issues in the Department's multimedia products, including reports by the United Nations News Service and programmes by United Nations Radio and United Nations Television. At the same time, the Department continued, working in close cooperation with various United Nations departments, offices, agencies and programmes, to compile a new list of "Ten stories the world should hear more about", which is scheduled for release in the first quarter of 2008.

Box 5

Unique United Nations Radio programmes

The Department of Public Information is preserving and making available on the United Nations website unique United Nations Radio dramas and documentaries from the period from the 1940s to the 1970s.

The collection is vast, but an initial sampling has been identified and digitized. The selections include the voices of eminent personalities, such as former United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, human rights champion Eleanor Roosevelt, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India, President Sukarno of Indonesia, President Dwight D. Eisenhower of the United States, communist party leader Nikita Khrushchev of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as well as well-known celebrities such as Danny Kaye, Bing Crosby, Audrey Hepburn, Laurence Olivier and Pablo Neruda, among others.

F. Archives

50. Progress has been made in restoring and preserving photo archives and in serving clients. Of the digitized input, the photograph collection of the United Nations Conference on International Organization, consisting of 3,000 records on the establishment of the United Nations, is now 95 per cent complete. As a result of the upgrading of the Networked Interactive Content Access system, the scanned images and their associated captions are ingested into the photo database at a faster speed than before, facilitating the archiving of more legacy photographs this year than the previous years. The introduction of the content distribution network will make available more high-resolution photographs, both current and historic, for self-service download over the Internet.

51. The Department continues to participate in the Archives at Risk group, of which the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is also a member and which provides a forum to help find funds to digitize more of its unique audio-visual collection. In 2008, much of that collection will be prepared for storage off site in anticipation of the capital master plan renovation of United Nations Headquarters.

VI. Knowledge-sharing and library services

A. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library

52. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library promotes knowledge-sharing and provides information services to its various stakeholders throughout the world. While at Headquarters the Library provides direct support to clients through training, coaching, reference services and content analysis, it has extended its reach to Secretariat staff worldwide through its internal communication and knowledge-sharing strategy and to Member States through its network of depository libraries. One of the challenges facing the Library in 2008 will be to ensure continued high-quality service throughout the period of the capital master plan relocation.

B. Research services, training and coaching

53. Research support and training of mobile Secretariat and mission staff in the use of new information tools and resources remains a high priority. In the fall of 2007, the Library organized a very successful training programme in General Assembly documentation, which was attended by almost 200 permanent mission staff. An equally successful follow-up training session, on Security Council documentation, was held in February 2008. Training programmes are updated to respond to client needs and additional courses have been designed to enable attendees to identify, evaluate and make efficient use of the high-quality online resources that the Library maintains or to which it subscribes. Customized training is available for specialized groups, such as groups of experts and mission staff. Through individual coaching and training, the Personal Knowledge Management programme helps Secretariat staff and delegates alike face the challenges posed by the overwhelming amount of information to be managed in a rapidly changing, and increasingly electronic, work environment.

Box 6

A total of 930 participants attended more than 120 training sessions and 203 individual coaching sessions organized by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in 2007.

C. Steering Committee for the Modernization and Integrated Management of United Nations Libraries

54. The Department continues to lead the Steering Committee for the Modernization and Integrated Management of United Nations Libraries in the coordination of its activities. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the library at the United Nations Office at Geneva share overall responsibility for digitizing older United Nations documents and jointly preparing content management manuals and guidelines. The Personal Knowledge Management programme is gradually being adopted by member libraries, which also participate in the cooperative purchasing of electronic resources through the United Nations System Electronic Information Acquisition Consortium, coordinated by the Library. The progress made by the Consortium was presented at the annual meeting of the Knowledge Sharing and Information Management Group of United Nations System Libraries, held in Rome in September. The meeting also provided an opportunity to share best practices and knowledge among libraries in the United Nations system.

D. Depository libraries

55. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library reaches out to Member States through its network of more than 400 depository libraries in 145 countries. In February and October 2007, the Dominican Republic and regional workshops of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific provided an opportunity to discuss the refocusing of this programme. The intention is to provide libraries, especially

those in developing countries, with technical support and training, teaching them how to access United Nations electronic information. By promoting new partnerships between national and academic libraries and United Nations information centres, this new approach will further extend the outreach capability of the United Nations.

E. iSeek

56. iSeek, the global Intranet of the Secretariat, supports the management reform process and fosters a culture of sharing of knowledge and resources. By building a community of staff across duty stations as part of its knowledge-sharing strategy, iSeek helps to initiate change in the Secretariat, allowing senior managers to communicate their messages to staff and facilitating the capture and sharing of institutional knowledge and the introduction of new technologies. Migration to portal technology supported by an identity-management system will ensure secure access to information available on iSeek by all stakeholders, including Member States.

F. Managing content and collections

57. In addition to creating bibliographic data for current United Nations documents and publications, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library continued with the retrospective indexing of important early documents. In 2007, almost 20,000 United Nations documents and publications produced at Headquarters and in regional offices were processed by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the library at the United Nations Office at Geneva. Developing the United Nations Bibliographic and Information System Thesaurus in all six official languages remains an important activity in the context of the enhancement of the Official Document System project.

58. As a multilingual resource, the Library collects, develops and maintains collections of United Nations and non-United Nations materials in the six official languages. Hard copies of publications related to peace and security and development are procured and made available to the Library's clients. Almost 22,000 items were borrowed from the collection for on-site consultation or lent out during 2007. The Library has steadily been expanding its online services. The planned relocation has made expediting the digitization of United Nations documents to ensure their availability more urgent. Ageing digitization equipment was replaced late in 2007 and, early in 2008, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management made available to the Library a high-speed book scanner for the digitization of early and now fragile United Nations documentation.

Box 7

A 2007 client survey carried out by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library indicated that 75 per cent of respondents prefer to access information online.

VII. Building partnerships with civil society

59. A central focus of the Department of Public Information has been expanding its partnership with civil society. The Department has been developing innovative ways and means of communicating United Nations messages through non-governmental organizations, educators, students, international celebrities and the private sector, in an increasingly integrated fashion.

A. Relationship between the Department of Public Information and non-governmental organizations

60. The sixtieth annual conference of the Department of Public Information for non-governmental organizations, held in September 2007, was devoted to the subject of climate change. It brought together more than 1,700 representatives of 469 non-governmental organizations from 62 countries who, for the first time in the conference's 60-year history, adopted a conference declaration. In the declaration, the non-governmental organization community committed itself to developing, over the following 12 months, a framework comprising both individual and collective action plans to combat climate change. Non-governmental organizations also reiterated their pledge to be active partners of the United Nations, local governments and civil society in implementing adaptation and mitigation strategies.

61. In view of the need to expand the reach of the United Nations to civil society organizations outside North America or those not yet associated with the Department of Public Information, the Department has initiated a process for the holding of annual conferences away from Headquarters in future, breaking with the 60-year practice of Headquarters-hosted events. In observance of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 2008 conference is scheduled to be held in Paris, in partnership with UNESCO, the Government of France and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Box 8

The designation of 2 April as World Autism Awareness Day by the General Assembly in December 2007 can be traced to the momentum generated by a joint briefing by the Department of Public Information and non-governmental organizations on 28 June 2007 on the theme "Autism: raising awareness, changing attitudes".

B. Messengers of Peace programme

62. In 2007, the Secretary-General designated four new Messengers of Peace: Daniel Barenboim (Argentina/Israel), Paulo Coelho (Brazil), Her Royal Highness Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein (Jordan) and Midori Goto (United States of America). Early in 2008, George Clooney (United States), was also designated. Mr. Clooney travelled to United Nations peacekeeping missions in Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan to raise awareness of and support

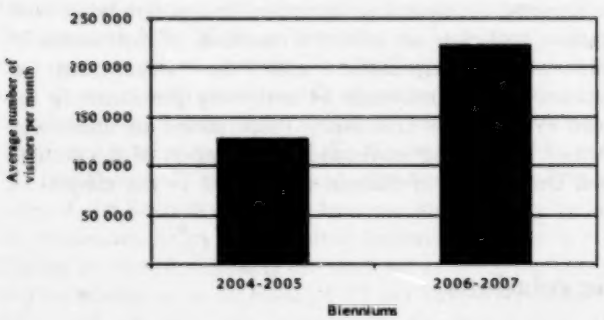
for United Nations peacekeeping efforts. He also visited India, a major contributor to United Nations peacekeeping. At Headquarters, Mr. Clooney participated in a press conference and gave more than 15 interviews with international media. The Department launched a new website in all official languages for the Messengers of Peace and Goodwill Ambassador programmes, which has averaged 14,000 page views per month. To help publicize the Millennium Campaign "Stand Up against Poverty" event in October, the Department coordinated interviews with the Messengers of Peace and the Goodwill Ambassadors that reached thousands of media outlets and millions of listeners globally through United Nations Radio. The Messengers also recorded call-to-action public-service announcements for broadcast around the world in all official languages.

VIII. Expanding educational outreach

63. The Department continues to expand and deepen its relationship with educational institutions, including the academic community, research institutions, civil society organizations and students.

64. Cyberschoolbus, the Department's Internet-based educational website, carried out a number of activities, including the launch of a new portal, "Ask the Secretary-General"; a feature on disarmament and non-proliferation for intermediate and secondary schools, developed in partnership with the Office for Disarmament Affairs; a web feature on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in partnership with Magnum Photos, to mark the eighteenth anniversary of the Convention; and live video chats on the issues of nuclear weapons, human rights, climate change and Darfur.

Figure IV
Growth of unique visitors to the United Nations Cyberschoolbus



65. The Department organized annual student videoconferences for World Environment Day, on human rights and for the International Day of Peace. The latter included young people who assembled at United Nations peacekeeping missions and information centres.

Box 9
Reham Al-Farra Memorial Journalists' Fellowship Programme

The 2007 Reham Al-Farra Memorial Journalists' Fellowship Programme was held at Headquarters from 4 September to 11 October. Five print (including "new" media), five radio and three television journalists participated in briefings at Headquarters, visits to media organizations and meetings at the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Atlanta Headquarters of CNN. The Department has found the six-week time frame to be optimum to accommodate this schedule of activities. Although the number of participants has been reduced slightly in recent years to 13 or 14 owing to increased costs, the number could, with additional funds, be increased again to a logistically and substantively desirable maximum of 15 or 16.

66. Another educational outreach activity of the Department is the UN Works programme. Activities included the creation of a new interactive website profiling stories of people in their communities to encourage and support multimedia campaigns with civil society; and a 16-page educational supplement about the Millennium Development Goals, circulated to 50,000 students and teachers in the United States. The website also featured the Secretary-General's appearance on the *Vibe Awards*, which aired on VH1, in recognition of the Jay-Z Water for Life campaign on water and sanitation. New multimedia campaigns about the Millennium Development Goals were also developed with MTV Networks.

67. The *Yearbook of the United Nations* and the *UN Chronicle* are a key part of the Department's efforts to engage the academic community. The fifty-ninth volume of the *Yearbook*, covering events in 2005, was finalized, and work began on the 2006 edition. A new, online, version of the *Yearbook* will be launched in 2008.

68. The Department has supported collaborative initiatives and programmes with institutions of higher education, including an informal coalition of institutions of higher learning that are already associated with the Department as non-governmental organizations, and a conference of university presidents in the United States, to be convened by Roosevelt University. Preparations are under way for two seminars on the theme "Unlearning intolerance", in support of the sixtieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the context of respect for the environment.

IX. Strengthening public relations

A. Guided tours

69. The number of people who took a guided tour of the United Nations rose to 444,566 in 2007 from 436,755 in 2006 — the highest number since 2000. During such visits, guides provide information about the activities of the Organization, including with regard to such issues as the Millennium Development Goals, climate change and demining.

B. Group briefings

70. In 2007, the Department organized a full calendar of briefing programmes for visiting groups (students, educators, non-governmental organizations, professional organizations, et cetera), as well as videoconferences and outside speaking engagements on many priority United Nations issues. Overall, 864 in-house briefings, 13 videoconferences and 52 outside speaking engagements reached 42,000 individuals.

C. Exhibitions

71. The Department continues to organize a rotating roster of public exhibitions. In 2007, 33 exhibitions were mounted in cooperation with a number of sponsors from both within and outside the Organization. Exhibition topics in 2007 included the dialogue among civilizations; human trafficking; drug-resistant tuberculosis; the Rwanda genocide; the exploration of Mars; indigenous peoples' culture; and the impact of environmental issues on indigenous peoples.

D. Public enquiries

72. In 2007, the Department responded to more than 42,000 enquiries from the public, including 7,833 letters, 3,926 e-mails, 809 telephone calls and questions from 4,390 walk-in visitors, as well as 25,692 petitions on various subjects. The general information website (http://www.un.org/geninfo) registered 478,072 page views in the six official languages.

X. Sales and marketing services

73. The promotion of United Nations publications is undertaken by the Department's Sales and Marketing Section through its offices and bookshops in Geneva and New York, a network of sales agents in over 60 countries and its e-commerce driven website. In 2007 the website was completely redesigned to provide users with an enhanced experience. Sales from the site continued to grow, increasing by 7 per cent compared with the previous year. The programme's traditional marketing included the dissemination of 80,000 publications catalogues, 250,000 flyers and brochures and attendance at over 40 book fairs. In terms of sales support, the Section worked to increase its efficiency by introducing contract staff in its warehouse. Sales at the United Nations bookshop in New York in 2007 were the highest on record, eclipsing the mark set in 1995, the year of the fiftieth anniversary, and representing an increase of 12 per cent over 2006. The Section also handled over 500 requests for permission to disseminate and sell United Nations publications as reprints of the original editions or translations for local markets. In total, the annual royalty income from these activities increased by 32 per cent.

74. *United Nations Development Business*, a self-financing print and online procurement publication of the Sales and Marketing Section, issued more than 8,500 procurement notices during 2007, working with 15 agencies (including the World Bank and all other major multilateral development banks) and reaching more than 1,200 subscribers in over 100 countries.

Box 10

A complete design and production service for the Organization is provided by the Department's Graphic Design Unit. Of particular note in 2007 were designs produced for three major events: the sixtieth annual conference of the Department of Public Information for Non-Governmental Organizations; the September 2007 high-level event on climate change; and the launch of the Secretary-General's campaign on violence against women.

XI. Publications Board

75. As a result of the Secretary-General's reform programme of 2002, the Executive Committees on Economic and Social Affairs, Humanitarian Affairs, and Peace and Security, and the United Nations Development Group, are charged with planning and coordinating all publications within their respective thematic areas. This reform effort is aimed at rationalizing United Nations publications and improving their coherence and focus and avoiding duplications.

76. The Executive Committees are expected to lead interdepartmental discussions on publications, organized along thematic lines, as well as to determine target audiences. This process will ensure that the decision to publish a given publication is made by those who possess substantive knowledge of the topic and have a real stake in the success of the end product. As a result, all publications programmes proposed by Secretariat entities, funds and programmes are now channelled though the relevant Executive Committees. The Publications Board, chaired by the Department of Public Information, is exploring ways to ensure that the Executive Committees fulfil this mandate.

XII. Capital master plan and its impact

77. The adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 62/87 on the capital master plan, in which it provides for the accelerated renovation strategy IV, has made it possible for the Department to better determine the future of a number of its activities. As a result of discussions with the capital master plan team, a solution has been found to the problem of maintaining visitor and related services that will allow for the continuation of as many as possible throughout the renovation period, albeit at a reduced level. The strategy will provide an opportunity to maintain some visitor services, such as presentations by guides, the United Nations bookshop and exhibitions, although the future of others, such as group briefings and the non-governmental organization resource centre, remains unclear, as final decisions on those functions have yet to be concluded. The relocation of the staff and collections of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library will have an impact on its ability to provide services for the Secretariat and for missions during the renovation period, although a small information centre for delegations is planned as part of the temporary conference facility. The Library will seek to redesign its services through increased online facilities to support the information needs of the Organization.

78. Moving the audio-visual records may have an adverse impact on the ability of the Department to provide prompt service to international broadcasters. To ensure the widest possible distribution of the unique audio-visual material of the United Nations during the construction phase, the Department is exploring partnerships with international video archives. As for United Nations Photo, the entire collection of negatives that have yet to be digitized will be scanned and stored on servers so that they can be easily accessed by clients. This approach is not possible for film records because of the high costs involved.

XIII. Conclusions

Steady progress has been made

79. Gaining public understanding of and support for its work is a priority for the Organization. The Department of Public Information, through the clear articulation of its communications goals and optimal use of its resources, has made steady progress in reaching this objective. By adopting a strategic approach which calls for doing what matters most in areas where it can have the greatest impact, the Department focused on a number of priority areas in the reporting period, including climate change, the Millennium Development Goals, peacekeeping and human rights. Its emphasis on increased cooperation with United Nations system partners through the United Nations Communications Group contributed to the progress made. In times of crisis, that partnership allowed the United Nations system to work together, to coordinate activities and to use a common approach for addressing communications concerns. In this regard, the guidelines for United Nations communicators on key issues have been both timely and effective. The successful expansion of the civil society outreach activities of the Department is another key element in its efforts to reach wider audiences around the world.

Emphasis on culture of evaluation is paying off

80. The Department's emphasis on a culture of evaluation has helped it to identify areas of strength and weakness. The emphasis on results has helped the Department to better align its products and activities with the needs of its target audiences. Since the introduction of a culture of evaluation, the Department has asked almost 25,000 users about the usefulness, relevance and quality of its programmes. In response to their feedback, the Department has made a variety of adjustments, so that today, the average positive rating of the products, services and activities of the Department of Public Information among its users is 84 per cent.

Public information capacity has been enhanced

81. These efforts have led to the enhancement of the public information capacity of the Organization and have bolstered the role of the Department of Public Information as the Organization's public voice.